



M E D I A R E L E A S E

STATE OF TENNESSEE
DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION

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PEDIATRICIAN AND CHILD POLICY ADVOCATE NAMED TO LEAD COVERKIDS

Nashville - Governor Phil Bredesen has named Dr. Andrea Willis, MD, MPH, a pediatrician and veteran public health expert, to lead CoverKids, Tennessee's new program to provide comprehensive health insurance to Tennessee kids. CoverKids is part of Governor Phil Bredesen's Cover Tennessee program for affordable insurance. CoverKids creates a partnership between the state and the federal government to extend comprehensive healthcare insurance to every uninsured child in Tennessee. Dr. Willis, most recently the Deputy Commissioner at the Tennessee Department of Health, now begins service under the Department of Finance & Administration.

"Dr. Willis has been a true advocate for children's health," said F & A Commissioner Dave Goetz. "Her experience as a pediatrician and policymaker will be invaluable as we strive to make insurance coverage available to every uninsured child in Tennessee through CoverKids."

CoverKids brings the State Comprehensive Health Insurance Plan(SCHIP) program to Tennessee with a three to one federal match for every state dollar invested. It will offer a comprehensive health insurance plan to children 17 and under in families that earn less than 250 percent of the federal poverty level, or about \$50,000 for a family of four.

Next steps for CoverKids include the finalization and submission of a Tennessee Children's Plan to the Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services (CMS). As with all programs under Cover Tennessee, the State plans to offer more information on specific benefits packages in the fall with coverage beginning early in 2007. To sign up for ongoing updates on Cover Tennessee, call 1-888-486-9355 or go to www.tennessee.gov.

Originally from Athens, Alabama, Dr. Willis has been Deputy Commissioner of the Department of Health since 2003. Among her achievements in the Department of Health, she initiated the Departmental partnership with the Boys and Girls Clubs of Tennessee to implement a nutrition and physical activity curriculum called "Commit To Be Fit". With a medical degree from Georgetown University and a Masters of Public Health from Johns Hopkins University, she is also a fellow at the American Academy of Pediatrics, on the Board of Directors for the Tennessee Center for Nursing, on the Board of Directors for the RH Boyd Society of the United Way and an ex-officio member of the Tennessee Commission on Children and Youth.

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